Thomas H. Wheeler, II
Acting Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division
U. S. Department of Justice

Dear Mr. Wheeler:

The undersigned 24 organizations have collectively been working locally and nationally to combat hate violence, and many have received invitations to the June 29th Department of Justice Hate Crimes Summit. We have reviewed the preliminary agenda and believe the summit could be a meaningful opportunity for community-based organizations to convey the widespread and pervasive impact of hate violence in our communities. We also believe that addressing and eliminating hate violence requires multiple approaches, including prosecutions, condemnation from high-ranking officials, local community-centered prevention strategies, public education, and the implementation of policies that treat all of our communities fairly.

However, given the Administration's executive orders and policies toward communities of color, immigrants, refugees, Muslims, and LGBTQ communities, we have questions and concerns about the summit's content and impact. Namely, it is important that the summit provide an opportunity to identify practices that the Administration and federal agencies will undertake to effectively address, condemn, and eliminate hate violence and the climate and policies that foster it.

In advance of the summit, we respectfully request you provide the following by COB Tuesday, June 20th: the list of participants invited both from community organizations and within government; a detailed agenda that outlines how the summit will be structured, including opportunities for substantive participation from attendees; and the ways our written submissions will be integrated into the discussion on June 29th and inform your long-term planning and implementation strategies. Because we believe that the current political climate and discriminatory government policies have contributed to the rise in hate violence, we request your assurance that our perspective will be given a full hearing.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Please contact Lakshmi Sridaran (Lakshmi@saalt.org) at South Asian Americans Leading Together or Mohammad Khan (Mohammad@mpowerchange.org) at MPower Change with any questions.

Sincerely,

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Amnesty International
Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC)

Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Interfaith Alliance
Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)
Matthew Shepard Foundation
MPower Change
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Bar Association (NBA)
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Education Association
National LGBTQ Task Force
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
People For the American Way
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
Sikh Coalition
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southern Poverty Law Center